

U.S. to Put Area Offices In District

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A top government official said yesterday that the Nixon administration has determined to locate all future federal offices for the Washington area within the borders of the District of Columbia.

Arthur F. Sampson, public buildings service commissioner of the General Services Administration, said the decision marked "a major change in policy" for the administration. Government unions and civil rights groups have sharply criticized the government in the past for relocating major federal offices in the suburbs.

Sampson, addressing the District's real estate and financial communities, said that GSA "will lease space in D.C. only" and would go outside the city only for "compelling reasons" in cases involving only small work units.

He said needed additional federal office space in the city will be located in "modern, functional buildings" leased from private developers.

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Such a policy would indicate that the government intends to spur new construction to help the District's troubled building industry.

As an example of the limited facilities that could be located outside the District in the future, Sampson cited a request by a small number of food inspectors to relocate in Fairfax, because their work was in that geographic area.

The policy change apparently evolved—but was not made public during the past year or a half, following an executive order by President Nixon in February, 1970. That order requires, among other things, that federal projects be located in areas where the economic need is greatest and where adequate housing is available for employees.

The meaning of the new policy for the construction industry, Sampson said, is:

"Start constructing office buildings in areas that will have a socio-economic impact on D.C. Build them to our quality standards and offer the space at reasonable and competitive prices. As space requirements develop, we will

lease these buildings."

To emphasize the importance of the decision, Sampson said that leases had recently been signed with private developers for major new structures in the city with nearly 1.6 million square feet of space.

They will house employees currently working in "second-rate space" within the District, said Sampson, and will also provide space for other unnamed federal agencies. The four projects mentioned, two already under construction, are:

- New Federal Power Commission headquarters at 825 North Capitol St. NE, 254,200 square feet.

- Treasury and Interior Departments office space at 23d Street and Virginia Avenue NW, 422,000 square feet.

- Labor Department space at 6th and D Streets NW, 435,000 square feet.

- Transportation and Health, Education and Welfare Departments office space at 2100 2d St. SW, 480,000 square feet.

The long-term impact of the new policy is expected to help halt business' abandoning of the inner city for the suburbs

and perhaps halt the trend of the city's population becoming even more predominantly black. At present, the city's population is 71 per cent black.

Recent government office moves to the suburbs have brought loud protests from government workers' unions and civil rights activists. Opponents of the moves to the suburbs say that such moves work great hardship on black employees who must travel long distances to their jobs and who cannot, even if they so desire, find housing near their new offices.

One case, a 1970 move by HEW to the Parklawn Building in Rockville, went to court, but the judge upheld the move.

Sampson also emphasized GSA's support for locating a sports arena in downtown Washington and not in the suburbs. Asked about developments near the D.C. line—which could overlap into Maryland or Virginia—Sampson said they would gain approval for federal occupancy only if D.C. benefits and if the District government were to approve such a project.

Sampson spoke at a meet-

ing called by the Washington Board of Realtors.

Another speaker Melvin A. Mister, RLA executive director, announced streamlined procedures for marketing available development sites. He said the new procedures would reverse a "trend toward continual deterioration" in the city's central core.

Mister said the new approach was developed to eliminate much-criticized and cumbersome procedures previously followed.